



# NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

November 26, 2001

The Honorable Bob Ney  
Chair  
Committee on House Administration  
United States House of Representatives  
1309 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on House Administration  
United States House of Representatives  
1705 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Stephen M. Saland  
State Senator  
New York  
President, NCSL

Ramona Kenady  
Chief Clerk, House of Representatives  
Oregon  
Staff Chair, NCSL

William T. Pound  
Executive Director

Dear Representatives Ney and Hoyer:

We are writing to express the support of the National Conference of State Legislatures for H.R. 3295, the "Help America Vote Act of 2001." We commend you on your leadership in undertaking to draft sound election reform legislation and appreciate your steadfast willingness to work with states to craft a balanced bill for states and the American people. H.R. 3295 provides an effective means for states to update and change their election processes without an unduly burdensome federal presence, and with much-needed federal financial support.

State legislators are committed to a fair election process. The bipartisan NCSL Elections Reform Task Force adopted ten core principles that embody the fundamental views of elections in the states. The first principle is that "the right to vote is perhaps the most basic and fundamental of all the rights guaranteed by the U.S. democratic form of government. Implicit in that right is the right to have one's vote count and the right to have as nearly perfect an election proceeding as can be provided." NCSL believes that the core principles enumerated in H.R. 3295 are consistent with the findings of our own Election Reform Task Force and identify an appropriate role for the federal government in meeting the states' shared commitments to modernizing the voting process and ensuring the integrity of the ballot.

Although H.R. 3295 contains minimum standards that will require states to certify that they have enacted legislation to provide for such things as a statewide voter registration database and provisional voting, these standards do not mandate how states should fulfill these requirements, thus allowing for necessary state flexibility in the implementation of the standards. It is only through a flexible approach to election reform that states can meaningfully improve elections processes for all voters. NCSL is satisfied that H.R. 3295 provides sufficient state flexibility.

We also wish to underscore the importance of receiving an appropriate amount of federal monies to assist states with the implementation of those standards that may otherwise be too costly. In these uncertain times and tight state budgets, federal financial assistance is critical to states' compliance with these new federal standards. We understand there is a commitment from Speaker Hastert and the Administration that sufficient federal funds will be appropriated to meet the needs of the states under this bill. We urge you to continue to strive for federal funding.

We again thank you for your excellent leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you for passage of this bill. Please have your staff contact Susan Parnas Frederick at (202) 624-3566 or Alysoun McLaughlin at (202) 624-8691 or by e-mail at [susan.frederick@ncsl.org](mailto:susan.frederick@ncsl.org), [alysoun.mclaughlin@ncsl.org](mailto:alysoun.mclaughlin@ncsl.org). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Speaker Martin R. Stephens  
Utah House of Representatives

Representative Daniel T. Blue  
North Carolina House of Representatives

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